

THE GARDEN STATE



Purebred Hampshire lambs on Godfrey Beresford's Sheepfields Farm, New Vernon. Mr. Beresford heads national Hampshire association.

By JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM

THERE is still no reason to toss 10-gallon hats into the air, nor is there reason to expect Little Bo Peep and her sister shepherdesses to appear on all the hills of Hunterdon—but quietly and unexpectedly steaks and lamb chops have returned from over the Western horizon to join famed Jersey pork in a growing meat animal production in the Garden State.

Now, New Jersey's 15,000 Aberdeen-Angus and Hereford steers and 16,000 ewes don't stir Western ranchers. The important thing as far as this state is concerned is that beef cattle have a growing stake in New Jersey and that sheep raising is expanding by leaps and bounds. No longer are hogs the only important source of dollars on the hoof on Jersey farms.

Don't sell hogs short, however—they still account for more than half of the \$18,000,000 realized annually by New Jersey farmers for meat animals. Some may sniff at the swine in Secaucus and Westville but those garbage-fed porkers literally bring home the bacon—\$7,000,000 to \$10,000,000 worth every year. They are the main reason why meat animals in New Jersey now bring agriculturists three times as many dollars as white potatoes, nearly twice as much as peaches and apples combined.

In the long run, nevertheless, the return of beef cattle and sheep to the state's fields and meadows may have more impact on New Jersey agriculture than hogs. From the standpoint of economic importance, swine are limited mainly to the two regions near New York and Philadelphia; there seem to be almost unlimited boundaries for the spread of steak and lamb on the hoof.

IN ADDITION, the big hog growers have been hit by a long and stifling quarantine because of an outbreak of vesicular exanthema (a disease whose symptoms are similar to the dread foot-and-mouth disease of cattle). That has made both their present and their future condition more serious than it has ever been, since it has stirred up a smoldering series of skirmishes between the hog growers and the dairy farmers.

Agricultural experts (not to mention politicians and editorial writers) have reached no agreement on whether garbage-fed hogs are an insurmountable problem or a blessing in scented disguise. Let them debate; let them not forget, nevertheless, that the swine herds in Secaucus and Westville go back a half century and more. They can't be airily dismissed.

"Jersey Pork," as a matter of fact, is a real New Jersey agricultural tra-



DOLLARS ON THE HOOF

Size Favors Western U.S. Ranches, but the New Jersey Farmer Realizes \$18,000,000 Annually from 250,000 Hogs, 16,000 Ewes, 15,000 Aberdeen-Angus and Hereford Steers

dition—one of the few reminders that the production of meat for market is a deep-seated New Jersey farm tradition. For years, after beef cattle and sheep moved West, only pork remained in defiance of economics which associate meat animals with the frontiers.

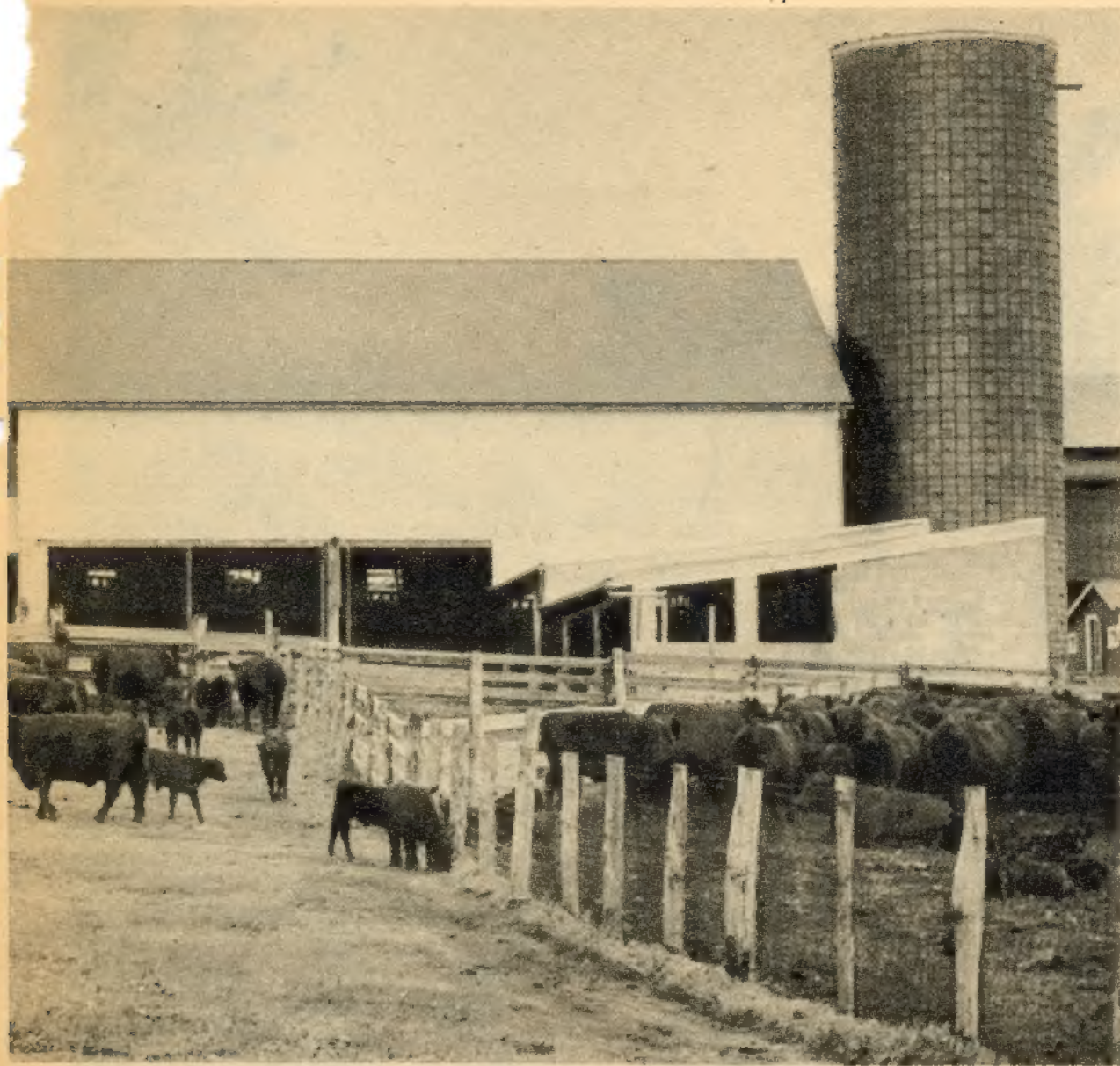
ACTUALLY, of course, New Jersey was once a frontier. That's why farmers of colonial Elizabethtown had to move their cattle to the wild West Fields (and thereby give a town its name). That's why sheep herds moved from the streets of Newark to the Orange Mountains and why pigs went west to Swinefield on the Passaic. That's why Hunterdon County, a true frontier for a full century, became a

coveted grazing land for cattle and sheep.

No state surpassed New Jersey in quantity or quality of sheep throughout colonial days—and even until well into the 19th Century. Just before the Revolution a count of woolly heads for Parliament showed 143,000 New Jersey sheep (20,000 in Hunterdon alone). No colonial domain had more sheep, and connoisseurs agreed that Gloucester, Salem and Burlington supplied mutton unequaled for taste in all the land.

Elizabethtown's rise as the colonial leather capital meant greater demands for hides, and consequently greater supplies of beef, since it is a simple natural law that where there is leather there must also be beef. In

This is the eighth in a series of articles on New Jersey's highly diversified agriculture, vigorous and growing despite the constant inroads of industrial and residential development. Next week: Grains, hay and pasturelands.



Aberdeen-Angus herds on W. G. Mennen's nationally-prominent Hide-away Farm in Chester. Jersey has a purebred population of 3,000.

addition, live cattle were leisurely driven overland to New York or Philadelphia markets. Near the end of the 18th Century Morristown became a center for beef cattle for New York butchers.

But for all the rib roasts and mutton chops, it was Jersey pork that set taste buds to watering in the 18th Century. New Jersey's home-smoked hams compared favorably with hams of either Westphalia or Virginia. Pork salted down in barrels went by sailing ship from Perth Amboy and Burlington to distant ports. Philadelphia's "true lovers of fat pork" licked their chops in 1767 at word that an 850-pound New Jersey boar—said to be the largest hog ever raised in colonial America—had landed in their market.

NEW JERSEY'S animal supremacy spread into the 19th Century, even as doughty pioneers pushed across Pennsylvania to the West. Naturally, then, Jersey farmers became leaders in the Merino sheep craze which swept across the infant United States between 1810 and 1820.

Merino sheep had little to do with mutton. Rather, wool shortages because of troubles with England and France brought that Spanish sheep into prominence—and when the mania struck, James Caldwell of Haddonfield had a corner on the fat, woolly Merinos. Caldwell bought his first full-blooded Merinos in 1806 (three for \$300) and spent another \$40,000 in 1809 and 1810 buying more Merinos.

As other sheep men sought Merinos or sought to breed their common ewes to Merinos, Mr. Caldwell prospered. His flock became one of the

most highly regarded in the country and Mr. Caldwell became first president of the Merino Society of the Middle States in 1811. Mr. Caldwell knew when to get in on a craze; he also knew when to get out—in 1815 he sold most of his flock, just before the Merinos became just so much soggy wool in a glutted market.

By 1840 scarcely a Merino grazed in all New Jersey, but sheep remained about as numerous as ever—219,000 rams and ewes by census count in 1840. New Jersey farmers had swung from wool to meat, fattening sheep bought from itinerant drovers who had herded their flocks overland from Western states.

Most contented themselves with fattening for the market, and no questions asked about pedigree. A notable exception was J. C. Taylor of Monmouth County, who imported prize Southdown rams from England in 1848 and in a few years built up the country's finest Southdown breeding flock. He sold sheep as far away as California in 1848—and at phenomenal prices.

NEW JERSEY still had wide open spaces before the Civil War, so beef cattle roamed the ranges on the hills of Northwest Jersey and over the plains of South Jersey along the Delaware. Particularly fancied were Durhams because of their bulky size and the fact that they gave more steak per pound of feed than any other beef-producer of the day.

Such cattle! Farmers stuffed them to prodigious weights, partially because in those days bull steers still served as oxen and partially because fat brought high prices from the tal-

(Continued on Following Page)



Bacon, chops and hams in formative stage on a Westville farm. Se-caucus, in Hudson County, leads state in income derived from hogs.



Linda Boardman of Bernardsville grooming her white-faced Hereford entry in a 4H class at last December's Atlantic City Farm Show.



Judging Aberdeen-Angus entries in an annual Breeders Show. Texas millionaires once paid \$100,000 for a half interest in a prize Angus bull on Dr. Armand Hammer's Shadow Isle Farm in Red Bank.

JERSEY MEATS

(Continued From Preceding Page)

low chandlers. Beef on the hoof reached a new high in 1823, when Job Tyler of Quaker Bridge in Salem County decided his monstrous ox had become quite mature enough.

OUT of Salem town aboard a steamboat gaily bedecked for the occasion went Job Tyler's ox. At Philadelphia the great beast went ashore on a trembling gangplank, to be greeted by a band and hundreds of beef lovers. They all paraded up Market St. to the butcher, and Job's ox disappointed nary a soul. His beef totaled 2,111 pounds, his tallow measured 365 pounds and his hide weighed 176 pounds—2,652 precious pounds of bull steer.

At about the same time, a couple of young oxen owned by Edward Tonkin in Woodbury began to put on the pounds, until by 1837 the pair had enough prestige to be called the Earl of Jersey and the Duke of Gloucester. Mr. Tonkin sold the two oxen that year to a man in Washington, when the Earl weighed 3,040 pounds, two scant pounds less than the Duke. The royal pair toured the land, and found travel so broadening that by 1839 they weighed 4,000 pounds apiece. The new owner decided they were big enough to have All-American names; he rechristened them Daniel Webster and Henry Clay.

Not to be outdone by the beef toters, New Jersey swine made pigs of themselves between 1820 and the Civil War. None equaled the pro-

digious size of the hog fattened by Benjamin Rogers in Burlington County. His poundage (the hog's, not Benjamin's) was reported at 1,611 pounds at weigh-in time in 1832.

Other fat porkers abounded in Burlington and Salem counties. Pick a few at random. Judge William Clawson of Woodstown fattened several hogs to more than 1,000 pounds apiece in 1850; his Salem County neighbor, Charles Clark of Pilesgrove, had 52 hogs averaging well over 500 pounds apiece in 1860. Such swine toted around such quantities of ham, bacon and lard that often they couldn't stand alone. Block and tackle became standard equipment in hog houses, just to put a boar on his feet.

Not all pig farmers lived solely off the fat of the land. Many paid attention to breed, and at least two excellent varieties—the Berkshire and the Jersey Red (forerunner of the Duroc-Jersey) owed much to New Jersey. The Berkshire was introduced to America in 1823 by John Bretnall of Bergen County. The "Red," on the other hand, seemed to evolve rather than to spring full-grown by importation.

YEARS of breeding and cross-breeding brought the Jersey Red into prominence throughout most of Burlington and Salem counties, although the name itself was bestowed on the breed by Joseph B. Lyman, editor of The New York Tribune and a New Jersey gentleman farmer. No producer of Jersey Reds achieved greater

attention than Clark Petit of Salem, however.

Mr. Petit became swine conscious as a boy and in his 'teens began building up a Jersey Red herd that became world-renowned. By 1875 his collection of purebred Jerseys at Hedgefield Farm was regarded as the largest swine herd in the world. After the Civil War his pigs went to nearly every state in the Union and to far-off Canada and Australia. Hedgefield swine matured in weight as high as 900 pounds—proving that even a purebred could act like a hog.

LARD days gave way to lean, as far as meat animals in New Jersey were concerned, when railroads stretched out to the cornfields and grazing lands of the West. A man could bring in his beef from Kansas more cheaply than he could raise it. Dairy cattle replaced beef cattle, disease and bands of sheep-killing dogs struck the flocks, swine became a fancy rather than a hard economic fact.

Statistics tell the story: Swine in New Jersey remained at a fairly constant level of about 200,000 head until 1890, when a drop began—to 175,000 in 1900, to 139,000 in 1920, to 56,000 in 1925. Sheep dipped more rapidly—dropping to 135,000 in 1860, to 48,000 in 1900, to fewer than 6,000 in 1925. The total of 92,000 New Jersey beef cattle descended to 19,000 in 1900, to well under 5,000 by 1925.

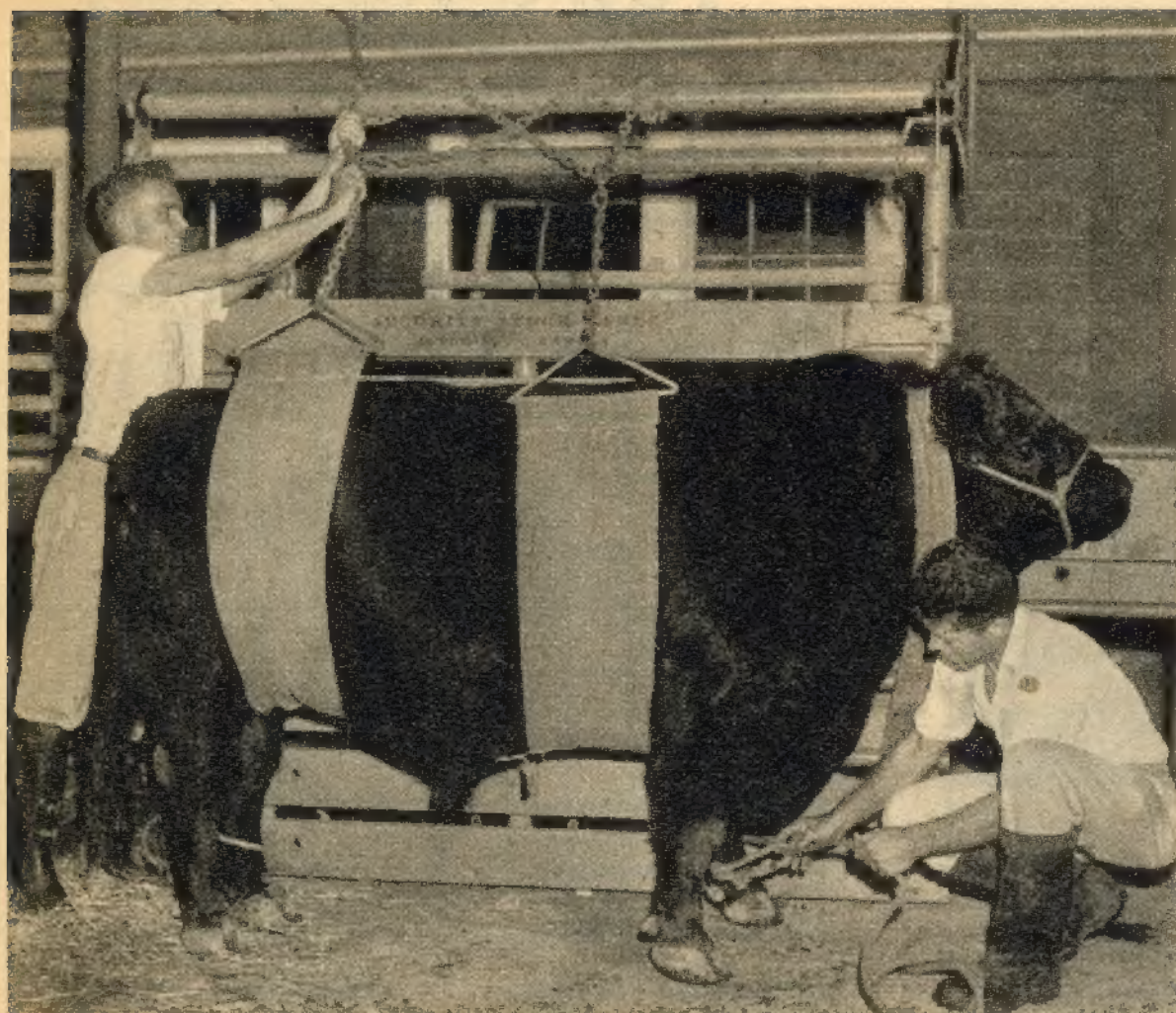
Outside of swine, then, meat animals had all but disappeared from New Jersey. The swine remained because of two things—because garbage

from New York and Philadelphia contained enough food value to make pigs both happy and lardy, and because neither Secaucus or Westville voiced violent objections to pigs in their midst.

Swine had a remarkable increase in New Jersey between 1925 and 1935, with garbage-fed pig population rising from 50,000 to 150,000 in those 10 years. World War II naturally accelerated the demand for hogs, and New Jersey's total of ham makers on the hoof shot up to 222,000 in 1944 and then up again to 268,000 in 1949. Of the \$9,000,000 accounted for by hogs in 1949, Hudson (Secaucus) received \$5,500,000 and Gloucester (Westville) took in \$1,800,000. Burlington, Cape May, Hunterdon and Monmouth counties also had pig incomes of more than moderate value.

STRANGELY, the United States Department of Agriculture still refuses to recognize the existence of garbage-fed hogs—an oversight which cavalierly dismisses 250,000 pigs in Secaucus and Westville. Those are spread through 469 herds, so the department's oversight smacks of pork myopia, to say the least. Recognized, however, in Washington are 3,640 New Jersey grain-fed herds—involving about 42,000 swine. Thus, each year about 290,000 Jersey porkers are readied for the loin, the chop and the ham, whether the USDA likes it or not.

Secaucus goes back about 60 years as a swine center, and from 1900 until 1925 only cooked garbage was fed the



Grooming an Aberdeen-Angus bull at Mennen's Hideaway Farm. Initial stage has cattle superintendent Richard McDade (right) and assistant Lorne Bryan fastening animal on stock. BELOW: A "pedicure."



growing hogs. One farmer started feeding uncooked garbage in 1921, and by 1926 all Secaucus swine got their vitamins from raw leavings. Uncooked garbage is a bone of contention today in the control of vesicular exanthema. Many contend cooking garbage would help control the disease; pig farmers say it won't make a difference one way or the other, except maybe to cripple their industry.

So the fat is in the fire, as far as hogs are concerned. Meanwhile, both beef and sheep seem here to stay—and possibly to increase.

NOT that sheep and beef cattle ever disappeared completely from the state. A few gentleman farmers and

animal fanciers kept either or both of the animals, a good example being Tranquillity Farms, established near Allamuchy in 1888 by Rutherford Stuyvesant. Mr. Stuyvesant hired Arthur Danks to manage his sheep, and under Danks, Tranquillity Farms became the foremost sheep ranch in the East.

Between 1930 and 1935 sheep and beef cattle reached an all-time low in the state, down to something like 3,000 ewes and an estimated 1,000 to 1,500 beef cattle in 1930. Parasitic diseases ravaged sheep herds, while beef just didn't suit the average farmer—who couldn't wait a year or two to get his money back from a growing steer.

Moneyed men kept beef cattle

breeding alive in New Jersey, concentrating more and more on either the black Aberdeen-Angus or the white-faced Hereford. Dr. L. P. Curtin of Cranbury introduced the Angus to New Jersey in 1928, when he purchased a herd of 25. Just before World War II New Jersey's purebred herds, while small, commanded respect in the beef world. The wartime shortage of beef stimulated interest in fattening steer (and not necessarily purebred, since any steak was rare in those days).

Today New Jersey's beef cattle population has stepped up to something like 13,000 to 15,000 head, split between two distinct types of farmer—the grower of purebreds and the "fattener," who buys young steer and builds them up to prime steak. There are some 3,000 Aberdeen-Angus and some 1,500 Hereford purebreds in the state; the rest of the beef cattle are spread among those bent on beefing up young animals for market. Some of the breeding herds have 150 or more head, but on the average, the New Jersey beef man has 50 to 60 head.

NATIONAL leadership is characteristic of the state's beef-breeding group. Purebred sales in past years at Dr. Armand Hammer's Shadow Isle Farm in Red Bank and Clendennin Ryan's Allamuchy Farm have attracted widespread attention. W. G. Mennen's Hideaway Farm at Chester is nationally known and other noted New Jersey beef breeders are Dr. Robert Cooke of Eatontown, Stephen Birch of Mahwah and Harold Wetterburg of Marlboro. Last year Mennen and Wetterburg jointly purchased a female Angus at a record price of \$38,000. As an interesting switch, a couple of Texas millionaires a short while back needed a prize Angus bull. Where did they go? To Hammer's Shadow Isle Farm, where they bought half a bull (keeping six months a year) and paid \$100,000 for the privilege!

Beef cattle are no longer solely a rich man's fancy in New Jersey. Purebred growers are interested in making money, of course; those who fatten beeves on extra acreage are obviously interested in another cash item on their ledgers. Monmouth County is the state's leading beef cattle county, followed by a concentration of purebreds in Morris County—but beef breeds of cattle are found in almost every corner of the state.

Farmers have found they can adequately support one steer on only two or three acres of good New Jersey pastureland (compared with 25 acres per steer needed on most Western grazing lands). They have found steers can reclaim rough and unused ground, that they can be fattened on such things as apple pomace and pea vines as well as grain. There is reason to believe that experts who say beef cattle will continue to register a steady growth in New Jersey in the next 15 years are not giving anyone a bum steer.

Not all Jersey-produced beef comes from Angus or Hereford herds. Out of the state's 160,000 dairy cows, for example, about one-fourth are culled and slaughtered every year. In addi-

tion, some 100,000 calves are born annually on dairy farms—and a goodly number of these are sold for veal after they attain a weight of about 100 pounds. Obviously, as long as dairying stays, so will these sources of beef and veal.

SHEEP may have even a greater future, particularly on the same rough uplands where they found nourishment a century ago. There are many who claim that sheep can reclaim thousands of long-idle farm acres, because of their habit of cropping close to the ground over any kind of terrain. Be that as it may, New Jersey in 1955 has about 16,000 breeding ewes—an increase of more than 100 per cent from the total of 7,500 in 1942.

Hunterdon County has seen a big jump in sheep raising since the war, particularly among the commuting "farmers," who have found sheep are less trouble than any other kind of livestock. Only at lambing time is the ewe a trial, and in the overall picture she is a "two crop" animal—bringing in money both from wool and lambs.

A major factor in New Jersey's present sheep picture is the "hot house" lamb—the lamb born in the fall of the year and fattened to hit market between Christmas and Easter, when lamb commands premium prices. Of the 10,000 to 20,000 lambs born in New Jersey every year, 75 per cent are "hot house." A 40 to 45-pound "hot house" lamb can command \$28 to \$30.

Wool has averaged about 60 cents a pound the last several years, and New Jersey's wool production has reached some 75,000 pounds annually. Thus, a sheep grower can figure on about \$5 shear profit, plus income from lambs. Some say a breeding ewe will bring in \$10 to \$12 per year from wool and lambs.

Sheep breeding is growing in importance in New Jersey, and last year New Jersey had the rare honor of having two purebred sheep raisers elected to head national associations. Godfrey Berford of New Vernon, who has a noted flock of Hampshires, became president of the American Hampshire Sheep Assn., and Thomas King of Whitehouse became president of the American Cheviot Sheep Society.

MAYBE some folk out West are not impressed by our 15,000 cattle. Maybe some folk in the East don't like our piggeries, but \$7,000,000 income isn't to be sneezed at—and when you get used to the \$7,000,000 part, the piggeries don't smell any worse than some factories. Maybe our ewes don't produce enough lamb to accompany a full-scale rending of the Whiffenpoof Song down at Mori's but 12,000 lambs mean a lot of chops.

Maybe there's no room for enthusiasm, when viewed on a national scale. On the other hand, meat animals combine to bring in some \$18,000,000 annually to Garden State farmers—not enough to make a man go in hock or to chuck everything, but not exactly pennies, either. In fact, for dollars on the hoof, it's a lot of money.